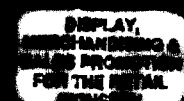


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JUN 25 1996

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

May 29, 1996

This letter will inform you of a serious problem that exists with respect to AT&T's handling of customers with 800 numbers and the new 888 toll-free numbers.

As a result of exhausting all 800 numbers, AT&T announced they were launching a new 888 series of numbers. Our company has been an AT&T 800 customer for 10 years. We have a mail order company that supplies video stores throughout the United States. Our catalog and 800 number are the only marketing tools we use.

Earlier this year, our AT&T representative discussed the new 888 numbers. I asked if there were any safeguards to prevent a competitor of ours from securing our number with a 888 prefix. His response was that we had "authority" over that number, it was "suppressed" and "protected". These are direct quotes. I was satisfied at that time that AT&T was indeed protecting their customers from unscrupulous acts by others.

Last week, I learned that my major competitor had done just that; he now has an 888 number plus our 7 digit phone number. Ours is not an acronym number and in fact, this competitor did exactly the same thing to others in our industry. There is no doubt that there was willful intent here. I am outraged at this, to say the least.

I contacted my local AT&T people who, so far have not responded. I spoke to another AT&T Representative today and he was under the impression that our company has prior authority over the number that we have held for ten years. His reply to me was exactly the same as was told to me on February 27, 1996. In fact, he used the very same words that I quoted above.

I then contacted the AT&T legal department in San Francisco and was informed that AT&T people had no business telling me what they did. I was advised by company lawyers that FCC has yet to take action on proposed rules governing the protected status of 800 number holders. The attorney that I spoke to apologized for AT&T's actions and statements and said they were completely inaccurate and AT&T field people had no business saying what they did to me. Apparently, the legal department never informed the local field people about this. And this apparent lack of communication continues even today and I am paying the price for it.

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Again, I tell you that I am outraged that I was given such misinformation about such an integral component of our business. In fact, just today, as I have stated, I continue to receive this same misinformation. My business can suffer irreparable harm if this wrong is not reversed. I'm worried about the very future of my business as I rely solely on my 800 number.

No one wants to accept responsibility for their actions. Calling the California Public Utility Commission and the Federal Communications Commission gets you voice mail and no return calls to me as yet.

I am awaiting a response from a letter I sent to Richard E. Allen, Chairman of AT&T in Basking Ridge, New Jersey.

I look upon my 800 number as any prudent business person would treat their name and/or trademark. An occurrence like this can and will happen to millions of unsuspecting businesses. Yet AT&T is doing nothing (in fact, they continue to dispense with completely erroneous information), the regulatory agencies are not responsive. And, a grave injustice is allowed to go on.

PLEASE HELP ... Businesses should be alerted to what's going on and how one of their most valuable assets is in jeopardy.

Sincerely,



Kenneth R. Chane  
PRESIDENT